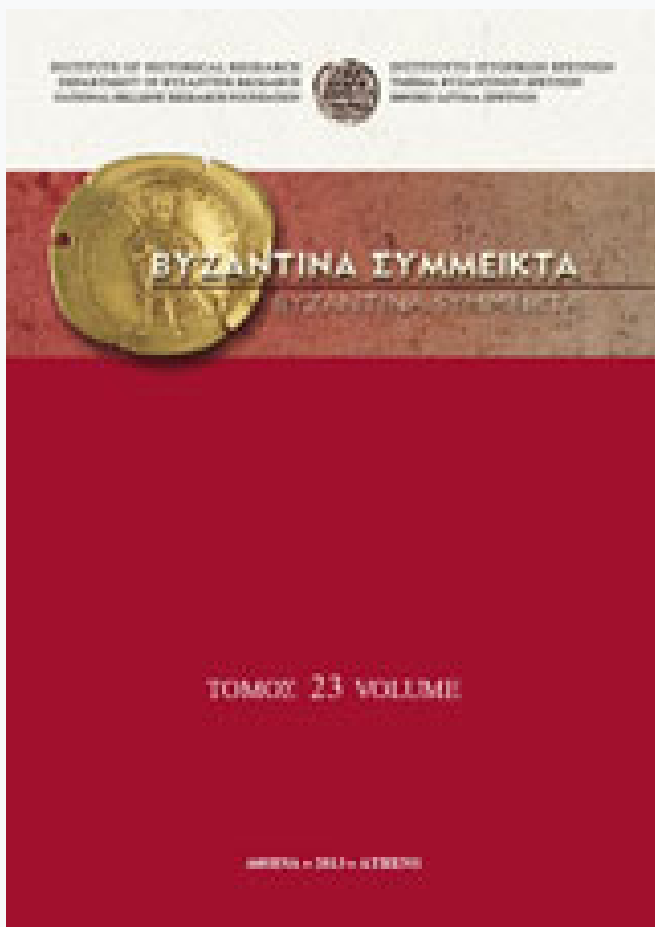


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Book Review: D. P. DRAKOULIS, Η περιφερειακή οργάνωση των οικισμών της Ανατολικής Ρωμαϊκής Αυτοκρατορίας κατά την πρώιμη βυζαντινή περίοδο (4ος-6ος αιώνας), ν. I-II (Βυζαντινά κείμενα και μελέτες 53A-B), Thessaloniki 2010

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D. P. DRAKOULIS, *Η περιφερειακή οργάνωση των οικισμών της Ανατολικής Ρωμαϊκής Αυτοκρατορίας κατά την πρώιμη βυζαντινή περίοδο (4ος-6ος αιώνας)*, v. I: *Θρακική-Ιλλυρική-Ασιανή* (Βυζαντινά κείμενα και μελέτες 53A), Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, Thessaloniki 2009, pp. xiii+344, includes maps. ISBN: 978-960-7856-36-4. ISSN: 1106-61-80. v. II: *Ποντική-Ανατολική-Αιγυπτιακή* (Βυζαντινά κείμενα και μελέτες 53B), Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, Thessaloniki 2010, pp. x+352, includes maps, 1 CD-Rom. ISBN: 978-960-7856-38-8

The vast geographical region extending from the Adriatic Sea to the farthest parts of Palestine, Syria and Egypt in the Southeast, whose northern and eastern borders are the Rivers Danube and Tigris respectively, is the topic of the regional study presented in this two-volume work. The research focuses on the formulation of a composite image of regions of the Eastern Roman Empire on the basis of their operating posts (that is, known urban focal points such as cities, towns and small settlements) that served the organization and functions of its administrative system. The author's efforts aimed at the identification of different categories of these focal points; their connection to provincial subdivisions; and, ultimately, their ties with central inspection mechanisms in Constantinople. The regional organization under examination also traces the hierarchical order of settlements at a local level, as set and recorded in official documents drawn up by administrative authorities in the period between the fourth and the sixth centuries. The development of the patterns of settlement in the Early Byzantine provinces is examined on the basis of the following administrative levels: a) the Empire as a whole; b) its division into administrative regions (dioceses); c) their division into smaller regional units (provinces); d) the level of cities, and e) the level of small settlements – villages (komes – choria) within each province (v. 1, pp. 3, 5, 14). Settlements are further classified on the basis of geographical and land functioning criteria. The basic criteria used for sorting sites to specific categories are ground morphology (lowlands; semimountainous; mountainous); proximity to the aquatic element (riverine areas; lake sites; or coastal and, conversely, inland areas); and their position within communication networks

(proximity to a regional principal axis or provincial/secondary axis). These major classifications that form the main body of the study are subsequently illustrated in contextual tables (v. 1, pp. 15-18).

As stated in the first part of the first volume, research for each location encompasses not only an analysis of the administrative boundaries and geomorphology, but also a brief reference to the productive activities of the primary sector and the subsequent processing of goods through relevant operations and transactions recorded by specific commercial – geographical works (mainly the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes et commentaire par J. ROUGÉ, Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1966) or state directories. This is further elucidated by data produced by modern research (mainly in the form of archeological assumptions) offering, for the most part, a specific number of references from basic publications. The total number of cities comprises those mentioned in the public catalogues of *Notitia Dignitatum* and *Synekdemos of Hierocles*, as well as in the official lists of ecclesiastical hierarchy (*Notitiae episcopatum*), following and enriching the list drawn up by E. HONIGMANN (*Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071 nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quellen*, Editions de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales, Brussels 1935). Cultural and geographical traits for settlements; types of roads; the structure of the settlements' networks; information on the date of their foundation; settlement models; these are all presented in conjunction with the above data. As regards administration, statistical analysis of information for each geographical-administrative unit is correlated with cultural standards through the use of the SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, see v. 1, pp. 18-19). The necessary apparatus for the study of each region, as outlined in the first part of the book, is complemented with an examination of the issue whether cities or smaller settlements were founded recently, or whether they retained their past positions until the period under consideration.

The designation of locations at the regional administrative and provincial level and the depiction of their relations with central authorities are carried out in accordance with the already mentioned qualitative geospatial data. The introductory part is also an illuminative preamble of methods applied for the recording and ascertaining of the location of the 3,048 settlements comprising the total number of hitherto known posts, some of which have been identified by excavations certifying various activities in the period under examination. The historical presentation of political and economic structures and conditions of each locality, as well as the methods and means of regional production, is quite brief (v. 1, pp. 20-28) and could have been more explicit as regards the distribution of officials or dignitaries

and their distinct political, fiscal and other administrative duties in each region. However, research results confirm the prevalence of administrative over military authorities, a fact that enhanced state bureaucracy and centralization. Most comprehensive is the presentation of the relation of networks to the bureaucratic apparatus controlling the production process, which in many cases was handled in situ (for example, in the production of oil and wine; making of silk; manufacturing of linen or wool; ceramics and glass workshops; state arms factories, mines and quarries); also certainly the transport of products and materials to the capital, despite literature in this field being immense.

Each relative narrative is well structured with comments on state control over regional productive resources. The description of the operating structures of local production and distribution of goods is undertaken separately for each region, obviously because of the vast dimensions of the geographical region under investigation, and does not proceed with a further analysis at the aggregate level. Nevertheless, it offers a sound infrastructure enabling future research to proceed on the basis of an overall or single case quest, since the projected geographic-administrative image can easily be analyzed in smaller spatial components and recomposed in broader areas, and the use of the documentation of the mapping material is also available in the attached CD-Rom. The cultural and geographical information, and the examination of the distribution of the population are based on the vectorization of the cartographic background (from R. J. A. TALBERT, *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2000) offered for the entirety of settlements. The period of foundation and diachronic presence of each one are also mentioned, along with historical variants of their names. Furthermore, each settlement's modern name is also included and complemented by the reference to its affiliation to a modern state, something extremely useful. The second part extends in both volumes and deals with the regional structure of each of the 64 provinces constituting the six dioceses (v. 1, pp. 51-282: Dioeceses of Thrakike, Illyrikon and Asiane, and v. 2, pp. 1-264: Dioeceses of Pontike Anatolike and Aigyptiake). This part is complemented with 90 maps, compiled on the basis of the road network (three variables: inter-regional; main; secondary) while taking into consideration each province's natural features, as explained in the first part. The insertion of historical and geographical data (that is, the administrative limits; geomorphology; production activities; primary and secondary networks of settlements; road networks and the structure of settlements' networks), also specified in the first part, is completed with observations relating separately to each province; distinct type of settlements (capital; urban centers; smaller or bigger settlements, etc.); era of their foundation, or duration and survival until the 6th century.

The third and final part of the book contains two chapters (v. 2, pp. 267-285). The first presents conclusions concerning the representation as regards the space of larger or smaller centers and/or rural settlements (settlements of size b and c) together with their specific features within each of the six administrative regions (dioceses). The second chapter summarizes the organization of settlements; their classification in relation to their distance from the Byzantine capital or in accordance with the way the residential network is structured and reflected in maps; and their position in relation to the interregional road network in the Empire. Each volume includes an index of historical-geographical names of the Early Byzantine era (in v. 1, pp. 283-293 and in v. 2, pp. 287-300) and is also supplemented with printed maps (in v. 1, pp. 297-340 and in v. 2, pp. 307-349). At the end of the second volume there is an English summary (pp. 301-304). The essential picture that emerges is that of a radial spatial model which expands in the form of a spatial web to three continents, as a network of settlements, with the capital city of Constantinople being the primary point of reference. Linear spatial models for each region are outlined in the conclusions and depicted in special maps.

Of particular importance are the conclusions on the density characteristics of settlements and the predominance of minor size settlements in the Early Byzantine period, in accordance with applied statistical calculations. Just as interesting is the observation that, despite the fact that the surface area of flat land was very limited, the spread of settlements in both flat and mountainous lands was almost the same. Consequently, the higher percentage of settlements during the Early Byzantine period was founded on mountainous regions, a trend which started in the Roman era. Of equal importance is the remark that originally these settlements had a limited extent. Many such similar comments may be deduced from the research methodology, proving its great use. The uniformity of presentation has rendered a comprehensive overview, both in printed and electronic form, the latter becoming more and more necessary, as may be judged from earlier and from most recent collective efforts of comparable magnitude and span, undertaken as projects, supported by academic teams and remaining open for the continuous incorporation of new data (*Ancient Places in Pleiades*: <http://pleiades.stoa.org/places/August 6th>, 2013; M. McCormick et al., *Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilization*: <http://darmc.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k40248&pageid=icb.page188865/August 6th>, 2013).

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